

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Economic Aide Sees Uptrend

By Drew Pearson

Sedate and scholarly Dr. Arthur Burns, the ex-Columbia professor, now chief of President Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisers, went to great pains in explaining to Senators why he had to testify about business recession in secret.

Then, after finally getting permission to talk in secret, he told the **Pearson** Senators almost nothing they hadn't already heard in public.

Dr. Burns, appearing before the Joint Committee on the Economic Report, explained that he had been searching his soul as to whether to testify at all. The way he looked at it, he had a confidential relationship with the President. However, he had given the matter deep thought. Since Cabinet officers are expected to testify, Burns decided he, too, had an obligation to appear before Congress—if requested. However, he had to insist that no transcript be taken of his remarks.

Sen. Paul Douglas (D-Ill.), an ex-professor of economics at the University of Chicago, promptly challenged him. Burns then went into a lengthy explanation, pointing out that in speaking off-the-cuff, he was apt to oversimplify a complex situation or to state an idea more positively than it ought to be expressed. Therefore, he preferred to keep his remarks informal. If a transcript were made, he said, it would make his testimony appear more formal than it actually would be.

There was also the possibility, he continued, that he might say something that would appear to be in contradiction of the President's Economic Report. He hastened to assure that he didn't mean he disagreed with the President's report in any detail. But in the course of speaking, he said, some statement of his might come out on the record that would appear to contradict the President. If that happened, he added solemnly, and his remark were made permanent in transcript form, he would feel constrained to resign within the hour.

Douglas started to object further, but Sen. Ralph Flanders (R-Vt.) urged that Dr. Burns be given the right to testify without even a transcript being taken.

As a result, Burns was allowed to proceed behind closed doors without his words being recorded. However, his testimony was perfectly safe and could have been transcribed without embarrassing the President or anyone else.

Burns didn't deviate an iota from the President's Economic Report. He admitted that we are going through what he called a "mild contraction." But he insisted there is no reason to believe it will become any more severe, and there is good reason to believe the economy will start picking up again in late spring or early summer.

Indo-China Dilemma

From two different sources, President Eisenhower has received increasingly disturbing reports about the situation in Indo-China. It is so bad that he has been seriously considering sending United States troops to Indo-China to train native troops.

One report to the White House has come from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, in Berlin, who says the French Assembly is getting nearer the point where it will vote to pull out of Indo-China altogether, abandoning it to the Communists. Dulles has warned that something must be done quickly or the French will take just such a step.

The second report comes from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur Radford, who claims that the real solution in Indo-China is the efficient training

of native troops. Radford proposes sending a top United States military man, with experience in either Greece or Korea, to train Indo-Chinese natives.

This would save French lives, and, he believes, would result in some real resistance against the Chinese-equipped Communists who since the end of the Korean war have received trainload after trainload of munitions, obviously diverted from the Korean front.

Radford's plan is now under study by the National Security Council, which feels strongly that something must be done to prevent communism from overrunning all of southeast Asia. However, Mr. Eisenhower is loath to send American troops to Indo-China even for training purposes. So far there has been no decision.

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Read Drew Pearson's column every day, including Sunday, in The Washington Post. Hear him Sundays on WTOP radio at 11:15 p. m. and WTOP-TV at 11:30 p. m.